

Message Text

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63

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

SAJ-01 OMB-01 ACDA-05 /073 W

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R 121540Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8599

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSYTAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UR, CH

SUBJ: SOVIET COMMENT ON HELICOPTER CREW RELEASE

1. AT A PUBLIC LECTURE ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE AT THE ZNANIYE SOCIETY JAN 11, SPEAKER L. POLYAKOV REPLIED TO A WRITTEN QUESTION BY CLAIMING THAT "AT LEAST ONE" OF THE CREW HAD BEEN SUBJECTED TO "SERIOUS PHYSICAL COERCION" (SERYEZNOYE FIZICHESKOYE VOZDEISTVYE), AND HELD THAT THE CHINESE SHOULD HAVE RELEASED THEM EARLIER, RATHER THAN WAITING 21 MONTHS. AT SAME TIME, HE SAID, IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT PRC HAD RECOGNIZED THE "CORRECTNESS OF THE SOVIET VERSION AND RENOUNCED ITS OWN CHARGES (WHICH HE READ FROM MARCH 1974, CHINESE NOTE) THAT THE MEN WERE SPIES; IT WAS ALSO GOOD TO HAVE THE MEN BACK. THE MORE

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GENERAL PROBLEM, POLYAKOV WENT ON, IS THAT THE

MAOISTS CLAIM THEY ARE IN FAVOR OF NORMALIZING STATE-TO-STATE RELATIONS, BUT DO NOTHING TO REMOVE OBSTACLES TO SUCH NORMALIZATION, AND INDEED INDULGE IN PROVOCATIONS WHICH CREATE OBSTACLES. NOW, BY THIS GESTURE, THEY TRY TO CREATE THE OPPOSITE IMPRESSION. THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, WHICH IS SINCERELY IN FAVOR OF NORMALIZATION, SEES THE GESTURE IN THIS LIGHT, HE CONCLUDED.

2. COMMENT. THIS IS THE FIRST PUBLIC SOVIET COMMENT WE HAVE HEARD ON THE CREW RELEASE AND THE LINE SEEMS GENERALLY MUTED. THE DIGS ARE THERE, AND THE REMARK ON "PHYSICAL COERCION" GIVES THEM ADDED POINT. BUT THE REMAINDER CONVEYS UNCERTAINTY ABOUT HOW MOSCOW SHOULD RESPOND AT A TIME WHEN IT REALLY DOES NOT EXPECT ANY SERIOUS IMPROVEMENT BUT FEELS OBLIGED TO KEEP SAYING IT DOES.

MATLOCK

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Message Attributes

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